(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Extension of railway upto Agartala

1750. SHRI NARAYAN KAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any provision has been made in the Eighth Five Year Plan for extension of railway upto Agartala;

(b) whether the necessary survey works for this extension have been completed; and

(c) if so, by when railway extension upto Agartala is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) to (c) No new railway line project to be taken up in the VIII Plan has been identified. Final Location Survey for extension on the railway line to Agartala has been take up. It cannot, therefore, be stated, at this stage, as to when the project would be completed.

Air India proposal to purchase airbus 340 aircraft

1751. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news item which appeared in "The Times of India" on the 10th July, 1989, to the effect that Air India is negotiating for the purchase of the futuristic, wide-bodied jetliner Airbus 340;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what amount of funds has been allocated for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL): (a) and (b) The integrated fleet plan is under consideration of the Air India Board which has appointed a Committee to evaluate different aircraft types and submit recommendations to the Board. The Board Committee has held negotiations with aircraft manufacturers including M/s. Airbus Industries; and

(c) The estimated cost of Rs. 1800 crores for acquiring 12 aircraft is proposed to be met out of commercial borrowings from Internatsonal Finance Market.

Decline in the Shipping Tonnage

1752. SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the country's shipping tonnage, at the end of the Sixth Five Year Plan, expected to be at the end of Seventh Five Year Plan and as on the 30th June, 1989;

(b) what are the reasons for decline in the tonnage, if any; and

(c) what remedial steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) Tonnage at the end of the Sixth Five Year Plan: 6.3 MGRT.

Expected tonnage at the end of Seventh Five Year Plan: 6.00 MGRT and tonnage as on 30th June, 1989 : 35.74 MGRT.

(b) The reasons for the slight decline in tonnage are, among others, the recessionary conditions prevailing in the shipping industry up to the year 1987 and the scrapping of a large number of old vessels in the Indian fleet.

(c) Steps taken by the Government to increase the tonnage are:—

(i) Speeding up the Acquisition procedures;